



Coordinator's Corner

On March 2 we pushed the "Submit" button, and our PEPFAR Côte d'Ivoire COP 2012 was finally finished. (Well, finished except for the cleaning, and questions, and review in Washington to determine whether it will be approved, and then the partner work plans, and the implementation, and the reporting. ...)



Jennifer Walsh
PEPFAR
Coordinator

This year's COP was a long, rocky road. The process began with a strategic review of the overall program in July 2011, in collaboration with our Ivorian ministry counterparts, taking into account post-crisis needs and opportunities, global PEPFAR priorities, and the new National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan. By September, partners were moving full steam ahead with their COP plans when it became clear that the new FACTS Info database in Washington would not be ready, and the COP12 submission date was postponed to spring 2012. In January, the team and partners were back to refining budgets, targets, and narratives, culminating in mid-February in a COP12 presentation to the government of Côte d'Ivoire. The presence and active participation of Minister of Health and AIDS Professor Thérèse N'Dri-Yoman and U.S. Ambassador Phillip Carter III, as well as representatives of most ministries and national programs involved in HIV/AIDS and other international donors, gave the event, and thus COP 2012, a great feeling of starting out on a common path.

The PEPFAR team and partners can be proud to have jointly developed a comprehensive and ambitious plan that proposes to use \$130 million to treat

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Key to success

Motorbikes and computers funded by CDC/PEPFAR help the Ministry of Education monitor the well-being of OVC and provide life-skills education for all students. **More PEPFAR Potpourri: Page 2.**

Where there's a will Project finds ways to overcome handicaps, limits

Koffi, age 8, had never been to school. Orphaned, deaf-mute, isolated in abject poverty, he was living with his HIV-positive grandmother in an Abidjan slum when a community counselor for Club des Amis, a local association of people living with HIV and a sub-partner of USAID/PEPFAR Côte d'Ivoire partner AVSI Foundation, found him.

Koffi (not his real name) lacked documents needed to enroll at the national school for deaf and mute people, but the persistent community counselor obtained the documents, the enrollment, and even a spot at the boarding school to spare the boy a costly and tiring commute.

Her efforts were matched by Koffi's will to succeed: At the end of the first year, he ranked first in his class and was a favorite among his teachers.

To strengthen the family's economic base, the AVSI project also helped his grandmother start an income generation activity making pottery, while Koffi contributes what he can earn in off-hours

from the shoe-making skills he's picked up. To project staff, who

support care for 12,920 orphans

and vulnerable children, the family's eagerness to learn and succeed validates their strategy of building interventions on the recipients' inherent resources.

At age 10, they report, Koffi is no longer a lost child buried in hopeless poverty; he's learning to communicate through reading and writing, and his friends call on him to fix their worn-out shoes.



With a little help, 10-year-old Koffi (center) is overcoming handicaps and vulnerabilities.

Success Story

PEPFAR CI renews operations research TA

PEPFAR Côte d'Ivoire is revitalizing its operations research portfolio with the resumption of training, the launch of a Web page, and other technical assistance under the leadership of a new associate director for science (ADS).

Dr. Abdou Salam Gueye, who was trained as a physician and holds a master's degree in public health from the University of Dakar and a PhD in biomedical informatics from the University of Utah, led the PEPFAR Côte d'Ivoire Strategic Information Branch from 2007 to 2009. After a stint as the CDC representative in Benin (2009-2011), he is back in Côte d'Ivoire since January 2012 as the ADS for CDC/PEPFAR, replacing Dr. Jamila Aboulhab.

The ADS is PEPFAR CI's senior adviser on scientific activities. The mission of the office is to contribute to the acquisition, analysis, publication, and dissemination of scientific knowledge needed for planning, implementing, and evaluating PEPFAR projects in Côte d'Ivoire. The office will particularly see to it that all PEPFAR-supported research protocols abide by the rules of scientific integrity, excellence, and ethics.

The ADS office will work closely with the CI National Review Board to ensure compliance with laws and regulations of Côte d'Ivoire.

Training sessions on CDC ethics rules started up again in March. The purpose of the training is to provide learners with the knowl-

tant to the ADS, at korotoumout@ci.cdc.gov.

Through the ADS office, PEPFAR CI will continue to promote decision-making based on evidence and the monitoring and evaluation of its programs. Other training related to the development of operations research pro-

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— Dr. Abdou Salam Gueye



ocols, the use of data analysis software, and scientific publication will soon be offered to PEPFAR technical staff and partners.

"PEPFAR is an implementation program. We want research to be its preferred tool for achieving excellence with efficiency," Gueye said. "We intend to remobilize scientists so that Côte d'Ivoire once again becomes a leader in HIV research in Africa."

A page at www.pepfar.net will soon be dedicated to research funded by PEPFAR CI. This page will contain protocols, scientific publications, management tools, and standardized procedures produced in Côte d'Ivoire.

Partner Profile

Who: Pasteur Institute of Côte d'Ivoire (IPCI)

Director: Professor Mireille Dosso

What: With financial and technical support from CDC/PEPFAR, IPCI is working to improve diagnostic services for tuberculosis (TB) and other opportunistic infections (OIs) related to HIV/AIDS, as well as infectious disease surveillance. Since its inception in 1972, IPCI has been a leader in the fight against key infectious diseases in Côte d'Ivoire. The country's significant HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STI) burden, along with the emergence of TB and multiresistant parasitic and bacterial diseases, motivated the project, which is designed to support centers of diagnostic excellence in six regional hospitals. IPCI will work to improve diagnosis in the field and to increase uptake of laboratory services for STI screening and for care and treatment of OIs that affect highly vulnerable populations, particularly men who have sex with other men, commercial sex workers and their partners, and people living with HIV.



Professor Dosso

The project will contribute to 1) continuing education for biotechnologists and laboratory managers, 2) the elaboration of national documents, 3) support for regional laboratories in the procurement of strategic microbiology commodities, 4) coaching and accompaniment of regional laboratories to implement high-quality activities and move toward accreditation, 5) capacity building for regional laboratories for early and rapid detection of epidemics, 6) organization and implementation of a national laboratory information system, 7) organization of an external quality evaluation in microbiology, 8) capacity building for IPCI through the development of new competencies, such as in the organization and management of laboratory data.

When: The program started in October 2010 and will continue for five years.

Where: The program takes place in laboratories and the TB treatment centers (CATs) in six regional hospitals (Yamoussoukro, Abengourou, San Pedro, Korhogo, Man, Daloa) and in six STI clinics.

With Whom: In accordance with the National Laboratory Strategic Plan, IPCI works in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and AIDS and all national laboratory stakeholders.

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Contribute to PEPtalk!

Do you have a news item, a story idea, a good photo? An insightful commentary? Share it. Send it to us at peptalk@ci.cdc.gov.

Contributors to PEPtalk No. 17: PEPFAR implementing partners, Korotoumou Traore, Ernest Koffi, Joan-Luis Njampo, Brian Howard

Ariel starts, PATH ends, donations continue ...

First Lady Dominique Ouattara and Minister of Health and AIDS Prof. Thérèse N'Dri Yoman (center, below) joined children born seronegative in PMTCT services and 300 guests to celebrate the launching in February of the Ariel



as part of an effort to transfer capacities and projects from international to Ivoirian organizations, Ariel will support a full range of HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment services as well as capacity building covering 250 health facilities in seven regions.

Motorbikes, computers, and office equipment funded by CDC/PEPFAR were delivered to nine Ministry of Education regional offices, seven

PEPFAR Potpourri

teacher-training centers, and the division of teacher training to support implementation of life-skills education for public school students and to monitor the well-being of OVC.

Computers and printers donated by USAID/PEPFAR partner Measure III will help eight Ministry of Health and AIDS regional offices improve the management of HIV/AIDS/health data.

IYCN/PATH leaves behind thousands of better-nourished children and women, as well as more capable care providers, after a six-year nutrition project that ended in March.

With DOD/PEPFAR support, the Côte d'Ivoire Ministry of Defense trained 20 health care providers from military sites in HIV prevention for people living with HIV/AIDS. Classroom training was followed by coaching of trainees at their work sites.



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81,000 people infected with HIV/AIDS, provide support to 100,000 orphans and vulnerable children and their families, and prevent thousands of cases of HIV/AIDS over the course of 2012/2013. Funds will be used to strengthen health information systems and the

national drug supply chain, improve human resources for the health and social sectors, and extend the national laboratory network, all crucial elements of an effective, sustainable, and country-owned national response.

In the spirit of excellence and efficiency, the team will continue to work to improve the process by aligning future plan-

ning with Ivoirian government and agency calendars and information needs. Your suggestions about how best to do this are welcome and can be sent to me and our agency representatives. We will use them to prepare for – we shudder to think – COPI3 early next year.

In the meantime, *bon courage* with COPI1 implementation!

Dr. Toussaint S. Sibailly



Dr. Sibailly, a leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Côte d'Ivoire and Africa, died January 22, 2012.

Trained as a physician, Dr. Sibailly was an early champion of PMTCT and helped lead programs and research on PMTCT during his years with CDC / Projet Retro-CI. After working in Rwanda for a time, he helped create Alliance Nationale contre le SIDA, an Ivoirian NGO born from the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, and served as its first executive director. He later joined the PEPFAR Côte d'Ivoire staff and served as USAID/PEPFAR focal point.

Comings & Goings



Simplice Kamdem, new USAID/PEPFAR supply chain adviser



Denise N'Dabian, new program manager for FHI360 FANTA 3



Per Kronslev, new country director for SCMS



Dr. Bedel Evi, new deputy country director for SCMS



FHI360 Director Dr. Gisele Semde, leaving for the DRC



Dr. Hortense Angoran-Benue has closed IYCN/PATH's nutrition project.